

Monthly Update – December 2012

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization. The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating our efforts on selected crops and regions, especially SAGCOT, to help transform the country's food security.

TRELLISING TOMATOES REDUCES CROP LOSS

Supported on bamboo sticks by several threads of string, tomato trellises give maximum spacing between each crop. Covering an area of one acre, this lush farmland sprawling through narrow highland valleys supported by a bowl of high mountains, has become a permanent base for Tresphony Anaclet, a retired police officer and father of four who decided to move back to his hometown in Mbeya to spend his golden years fulfilling his passion: farming.

Despite Mbeya being blessed with good rainfall and fertile soil to enable it to be the biggest producer of high-value export and cash crops in Tanzania, smallholders in the region are practicing farming methods that are not in balance with the surrounding ecosystem, costing them 50 percent crop loss, especially in tomato production.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

USAID-TAPP agronomist Milton Chitanda (middle) demonstrates to Tresphony Anaclet (left), a retired police officer, how to install trellising at his tomato farm in Mbalali, Mbeya.

In comparison to traditional agricultural methods carried out in neighboring fields, Anaclet's tomato field will see higher production yields and healthier crops thanks to good agricultural practices such as using seedling trays, raised beds, trellising, starter solution, and a germination chamber he learned from USAID-TAPP agronomist, Milton Chitanda.

Just like Anaclet, in neighboring Njombe region, Scoud Mgani used these new technologies to plant Irish potatoes on his 0.2 acres farm, where he harvested 1,280kg on Christmas day, giving him a profit of Tsh 448,000 (\$285) from total sales, compared to the Tsh240,000 (\$153) for 960kg he harvested mid of the year using traditional methods.

TRAINING ON NUTRITION TO IMPROVE LIVELIHOOD OF VULNERBALE GROUPS

USAID-TAPP, together with an NGO in Iringa, carried out a training of trainers for 25 members of 13 different Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV) groups on gardening and nutrition. In addition to these trainings, USAID-TAPP has played a role in the development of three demonstration plots in the Iringa region, one for sweet pepper and one for onion production based in Ruaha Mbuyuni and one for sweet pepper production in Kilolo district. Three different groups will benefit from these plots, as they will use them for commercial purposes and for consumption.

Also in Iringa, the Chemchem group planted 200 Moringa tree seedlings to distribute to other members to improve nutrition. USAID-TAPP continues to promote Moringa tree production, as multiple health benefits have been proven, especially for individuals living with HIV. More than 6 acres of demonstration plots in Mang'ola, Morogoro, and Mbeya have adopted the use of the Moringa tree leaves as both live barriers and a dietary supplement. The leaves are dried and ground to powder form for consumption.

In Zanzibar, partner ZAPHA+ reported that as a result of its members adopting USAID-TAPP technologies, 16 of them have made a profit of Tsh 1,591,980 (\$1,014) from selling sweet potato leaves, tomato, sweet pepper, okra, eggplant, African eggplant, Chinese cabbage, and amaranth. Feeling optimistic about their livelihoods, the members are happy that horticulture has given them something to live for, despite their current HIV status.

FEMALE FARMER TAKING ON THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Juggling her time between her farm in Majengo, Arusha and her shop in town, this middle-aged mother of four is tipping the scales of horticulture. Known as Mama Elly to many within her community, this enthusiastic optimist plans to make her money work for her.

Since joining USAID-TAPP in November 2011, Mama Elly has managed to restructure her 3 acres of farmland to accommodate for a quarter of an acre for tomatoes, half an acre for banana tissue culture, one acre for avocado, and the remaining portions divided equally between the onions, carrots, beetroot, and sweet pepper she farms.

With a good source of water supply from the borehole located on her farm, and now the reservoir currently under construction on her farm, Mama Elly has made a profit of Tsh 500,000 (\$319) from her small beetroot plot, and her first tomato harvest has resulted in a gross profit of Tsh 4,000,000, (\$2,548). She still has plenty of other crops under production, which once harvested, will help pay off for her hard work and commitment.

HIGH VALUE CROP IN DEMAND ON THE COASTAL STRIP

Arabic and Indian influences are found in coastal cooking where spices such as garlic are commonly used in Swahili cuisine. With a growing market among coastal dwellers, Mozambique and Malawi for this high-value crop, USAID-TAPP saw a need for garlic production in the southern highlands of Mbeya and Iringa.

With favorable climatic conditions suitable for garlic production, Samson Gazika, a USAID-TAPP agronomist, is working with smallholders from the Umoja ni Nguvu Itaga Farmers Group in the initial stages of land preparation, breaking seed dormancy and improving spacing through good agricultural practices (GAPs), whilst contributing technical assistance and garlic seeds to the group members.

Before being introduced to new technologies by USAID-TAPP in August 2012, group members were using traditional methods on non-value crops such as maize, bananas, and dried beans, making only a profit of Tsh 1,200,000 (\$764) a year from their harvests. With support from USAID-TAPP, and the groups' interest in crop variation, garlic will be cultivated to curb the growing demand of this cool season crop in the country.

With this new venture into garlic production, the farmers will see a profit increase of five times of their last profit made, allowing them to expand the business, buy more land and invest in drip irrigation.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

"Increased food security through enhanced productivity"

TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification, and improved market access.

Visit www.tanzania-agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The content is the sole responsibility of Fintrac and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.